(c) Mycobacteria have evolved siderophores with lipid chain tails that enable them to exploit the macrophage's lipid-trafficking system to capture iron more efficiently. Now that these major siderophore genes have been defined as mentioned above, understanding the biosynthetic pathway that they are responsible for is the next step necessary in order to move eventually to the stage of developing small-molecule inhibitors with the potential to emerge as novel anti-tuberculosis drugs.

Recruitment age of nurses

2505. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the age limit for recruitment of nurses/ sisters/male nurses in all the Central Government hospitals in the country is 35 years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi recently brought out an advertisement for recruitment of above mentioned staff and the age limit prescribed was 30 years; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (c) According to the guidelines of Department of Personnel and Training the upper age limit for direct recruitment to the posts carrying the scale of pay of Rs. 5000-8000/- is 25 years. However, in the case of Central Government Hospitals and All India Institute of Medical Sciences the prescribed upper age limit for the post of Staff Nurses/Male Nurses is 35 years and 30 years respectively.

Smack addicts in India

2506. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that smack, a retail business out of opium, addicts are growing leaps and bounds in Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and 3/4th of opium in India is available in some parts of Madhya Pradesh;

(b) how many smack mandis are officially recognised; and

(c) what are the efforts taken to tackle this menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (c) The National Survey Report on "The Extent, Pattern and Trends of Drug Abuse in India 2004" sponsored by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, demonstrates that alcohol, cannabis, opium, heroin are the major drugs of abuse in the country. The aforesaid National Survey Report has estimated that in the year 2001 there were about 62.5 million alcohol users, about 8.7 million cannabis users and about 2 million users of opium in the country. The highest number of opium users were reported from Punjab (around 56%), followed by Rajasthan (around 11%) and Haryana (around 6%), the remaining (around 26%) were reported from other States and UTs.

Narcotics drug trafficking being a clandestine and illegal activity, there is no officially recognized smack mandi.

The Government has taken a number of steps to curb narcotics trade and drug peddling in the country. These include—

(1) Strict surveillance and enforcement at import and export points, land borders, airports, foreign post offices, etc.

(2) Intensive preventive and interdiction efforts along known drug routes.

(3) Improved coordination between the various drug law enforcement agencies in order to impart greater cohesion to interdiction.

(4) Identification of illicit cultivation of the opium poppy and the wild growth of cannabis and eradication of these sources of supply.

(5) Strengthening of international liaison to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of operational intelligence.

(6) Increased international co-operation for exchange of information and investigative assistance in administering control over the movement of precursor chemicals.

(7) Building of an electronic data base of offenders.

(8) Conducting training programmes for law enforcement officials for upgrading their skills to combat drug trafficking.

(9) Implementing a scheme of monetary rewards for information leading to seizures of narcotics drugs to informants and officers.

(10) Drug De-addiction Programmes are being implemented by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The programme of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare focuses on demand reduction by providing treatment services in Government medical college hospitals, District hospitals etc. under this programme currently 122 Drug De-addiction Centres are being supported across the country. The Programme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment supports Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) run Drug De-addiction Centres that primarily focuses on rehabilitation and counselling of drug addicts.

Healthcare System in Kalahandi region of Orissa

2507. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Kalahandi region of Orissa is the most poverty-stricken area of the country and this region is yet to see any development in the healthcare system;

(b) whether Government are also aware that the cash-strapped Orissa State does not have sufficient wherewithal to address this problem; and

(c) if so, what is the action plan of Government to help the State to develop its healthcare facilities, especially for women and children to control Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in this region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) Orissa